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CONVERSATIONS WITH ANDREOTTI AND PICCOLI

SUMMARY: DURING SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS ON OCTOBER 20 WITH BUDGET MINISTER ANDREOTTI AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DC) CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES GROUP PRESIDENT PICCOLI, I EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN OVER THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DC PARTY. IN REPLY BOTH ANDREOTTI AND PICCOLI CONCURRED. THEY WENT ON TO STRESS THE NEED TO BRING DEFENSE MINISTER FORLANI IN AS DC SECRETARY TO REPLACE ZACCAGNINI AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEY SAID THAT A SUBSTANTIAL MAJORITY OF THE PARTY, INCLUDING MOST OF DC CENTER AND RIGHT WING FACTIONS, WOULD SUPPORT FORLANI IF HE MADE HIS MOVE BY THE TIME OF THE DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING EXPECTED IN MID-NOVEMBER. END SUMMARY.

A. CONVERSATION WITH ANDREOTTI

1. STATE OF DC PARTY -- I TOLD ANDREOTTI OF MY CONCERN THAT TIME SEEMED TO BE RUNNING OUT FOR THE DC SINCE, FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE DISASTROUS JUNE 15 ELECTIONS, THE PARTY HAD NOT TAKEN EFFECTIVE ACTION TO TURN THE SITUATION AROUND. I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT KEY DC LEADERS LIKE HIMSELF AND DEFMIN FORLANI COULD HELP TO SAVE THE PARTY BY SHOWING THE ITALIAN PEOPLE THAT THE DC IS REALLY CAPABLE OF REFORM AND REJUVENATION. ANDREOTTI REPLIED THAT MUCH IS BEING DONE BEHIND THE SCENES TO TRY TO TURN THE PARTY

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AROUND. A GROUP OF TOP DC LEADERS (NOT NAMED) HAVE

RECENTLY CONCLUDED THAT ACTION MUST BE TAKEN BY MID-NOVEMBER (WHEN A DC NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IS SCHEDULED) TO CLARIFY PARTY POLICY AND ORGANIZATION. HE SAID THAT ZACCAGNINI, A DECENT AND HONEST MAN, SIMPLY DOES NOT HAVE THE HEALTH TO TAKE ON THE VIGOROUS JOB WHICH MUST BE DONE. (NOTE: ZACCAGNINI HAD RECENTLY BEEN SUFFERING FROM ULCERS. HOWEVER, DC POLICY TOWARD THE COMMUNISTS (PCI) RATHER THAN HEALTH IS THE KEY ISSUE INVOLVED.) CHANGES IN THE PARTY CANNOT AWAIT A CONGRESS NEXT FEBRUARY OR MARCH. ACCORDING TO ANDREOTTI, A LARGE MAJORITY OF THE PARTY WOULD SUPPORT FORLANI AS PARTY SECRETARY AND HE THOUGHT FORLANI WOULD PROBABLY ACCEPT. ANDREOTTI EXPRESSED THE STRONG HOPE THAT HE WOULD DO SO BY NOVEMBER 15.

2. PARTY ORGANIZATION -- ANDREOTTI ASKED ME IF I HAD ANY IDEAS CONCERNING WAYS IN WHICH THE DC COULD ORGANIZE ITSELF MORE EFFECTIVELY. DRAWING ON AN AMERICAN POLITICAL EXAMPLE AT THE STATE LEVEL, I SUGGESTED THAT ONE POSSIBILITY WOULD BE TO DIVIDE THE COUNTRY INTO 4 OR 5 AREAS EACH COMPRISING SEVERAL REGIONS, DEPENDING ON POPULATION AND SIZE, AND ASSIGN A DEPUTY PARTY SECRETARY TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH LOCAL PROBLEMS AND BEEF UP THE PARTY'S LOCAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE. ANDREOTTI EXPRESSED INTEREST AND TOOK NOTES ON THE SUGGESTION.

3. DC PRESS RELATIONS -- I TOLD ANDREOTTI OF MY CONCERN THAT THE DC HAS NOT TAKEN ENOUGH ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR TOP LEADERS TO MEET THE PRESS, PARTICULARLY FOREIGN JOURNALISTS, AND THAT THEY THEREFORE OFTEN HAVE NEGATIVE PRESS COVERAGE OF PARTY DEVELOPMENTS. I COMPARED THIS WITH HIGHLY EFFICIENT PCI PRESS RELATIONS AND THE EASE WITH WHICH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS CAN SEE TOP COMMUNIST LEADERS. ANDREOTTI TOOK NOTE OF MY REMARKS AND INDICATED APPRECIATION FOR THEM.

4. MORO GOVERNMENT -- ALTHOUGH ANDREOTTI DOES NOT PREDICT AN EARLY GOVERNMENT CRISIS, HE SAID THAT A GREAT DEAL WOULD DEPEND ON SOCIALIST (PSI) ATTITUDES. (NOTE: THE MANCINI MINORITY WING OF THE PSI IS NOT CALLING FOR A CRISIS.) HE SAID IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR THE US TO
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CULTIVATE SOCIALIST LEADERS AND MENTIONED MANCINI AND DEMARTINO AS WELL AS MARIOTTI AS LEADERS WITH WHOM WE SHOULD BE IN TOUCH. HE ALSO URGED THAT, IN ADDITION TO LA MALFA, WHO IS "SHOWING UP," WE SHOULD KEEP CLOSE TO REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERS LIKE CAMPAGNA, CIFARELLI, BATTAGLIA AND BANDIERA.

5. ATTITUDE OF DC LEADERS TOWARD PCI PARTICIPATION IN

GOVERNMENT -- ANDREOTTI EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT THERE ARE VERY VERY FEW DC LEADERS WHO WOULD FAVOR PCI ENTRY INTO GOVERNMENT. THE LARGE MAJORITY OF DC LEADERS, HE SAID, ARE DEFINITELY ANTI-COMMUNIST.

B. PICCOLI CONVERSATION

1. SUPPORT FOR FORLANI TO REPLACE ZACCAGNINI AS DC SECRETARY -- PICCOLI ECHOED AND AMPLIFIED MUCH OF WHAT ANDREOTTI TOLD ME ABOUT THE NEED TO ACT QUICKLY, BEFORE A PARTY CONGRESS, TO RECAPTURE THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE FOR THE DC PARTY. IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF HIS CALL ON ME WAS TO URGE THE MERITS OF FORLANI AS PARTY SECRETARY AND TO CONVINCE ME THAT IT IS IN US INTERESTS THAT FORLANI MOVE QUICKLY TO OUST ZACCAGNINI AS DC SECRETARY. PICCOLI STATED CLEARLY THAT A MAJORITY OF THE PARTY, INCLUDING MOST OF THE CENTRIST DOROTEO FACTION, THE ANDREOTTI FORCES AND FORLANI-FANFANI SUPPORTERS, WOULD SUPPORT A NEAR-TERM BID BY FORLANI FOR THE SECRETARYSHIP. FORLANI MUST NOT WAIT UNTIL A CONGRESS NEXT YEAR; THERE IS NOT TIME. IF HE REFUSES TO ACT NOW, ALL BETS ARE OFF AND THERE IS A RISK THAT THE PARTY FACTIONS WILL MOVE TOWARD THE CONGRESS IN DISARRAY, EACH JOCKYING IN TRADITIONAL FASHION FOR A FAVORABLE POSITION.

2. ASSESSMENT OF MORE AND ZACCAGNINI -- PICCOLI WAS HARSH IN HIS JUDGEMENT OF ZACCAGNINI. ALTHOUGH AN HONEST MAN, HE SAID, ZACCAGNINI BELIEVES AT HEART THE DC MUST ACCEPT THE PCI INTO THE MAJORITY. ZACCAGNINI IS TRYING TO GIVE THE DC LEFT CONTROL OF THE PARTY. THE CENTRIST MAJORITY HAS BLOCKED HIM, BUT THE DC CANNOT AFFORD TO LEAVE HIM IN PLACE ANY LONGER. MORO, PICCOLI SAID, HAS LONG BEEN CONVINCED THE PCI WILL EVENTUALLY ENTER THE SECRET

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MAJORITY AND FEELS THAT HIS ROLE IS TO SEE THAT THIS HAPPENS WITH AS LITTLE TRAUMA AS POSSIBLE.

3. PCI AND THE MORO GOVERNMENT -- PICCOLI SAID THAT THE PCI'S INFLUENCE IN PARLIAMENT IS GROWING ALL THE TIME. MORE AND MORE THE PCI IS SEEKING TO MIX ITS VOTES WITH THE MAJORITY. IF THE TREND CONTINUES, THE PCI WILL DE FACTO BE WITHIN THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME. THE WEAKNESS AND IMMOBILITY OF THE MORE GOVERNMENT AND THE EQUIVOCAL ATTITUDE OF ZACCAGNINI TOWARD THE PCI ARE HELPING MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

C. COMMENT

1. THE PARALLEL LINE WHICH ANDREOTTI AND PICCOLI TOOK

ON THE INTERNAL DC SITUATION INDICATE THE SHARPNESS OF
DC INTERNAL DIVISIONS AND SUGGEST THAT MATTERS WITHIN
THAT PARTY MAY RAPIDLY BE COMING TO A HEAD. I WILL BE
MEETING WITH FORLANI OCTOBER 23 AND HOPE AT THAT TIME TO
GET A CLEAR PICTURE OF HIS ATTITUDE AND INTENTIONS. AT
THAT POINT I HOPE TO BE IN A POSITION TO OFFER SOME
JUDGEMENTS ON THE EVOLVING SITUATION WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN
DEMOCRATIC PARTY. VOLPE

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